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***Dr. Elizabeth Newcomb, center,
assists Brandi Dowdy, senior, in
pinning a muslin on Cierra Ross,
junior, during a draping class in the
new design lab in Benbow Hall.***



Fashionable program gets major facility upgrade

THE FASHION MERCHANDISING AND DESIGN PROGRAM opened its modern new design laboratory in April, and students and faculty couldn't be happier.

Among them is Christina Mercer of Raleigh, who has had her sights set on a career in the fashion industry since childhood. Mercer shopped through several programs around the country, and said A&T's stood out, because its curriculum includes both merchandising and design, whereas majors in most other universities' curriculums separate the business side from the creative side of fashion.

"I really enjoy learning both aspects of the industry," she said.

Now in her senior year, Mercer can say with confidence

that she made the right decision, and says the program prepared her to pursue what she sees as her career niche: fashion journalism.

"It [the program] exceeded my expectations," she said.

Until recently, however, Mercer couldn't say the same for the outdated design lab in Benbow Hall, in which, she said: "It was really tough to get anything done." Mercer said she and other students advocated persistently for better facilities and that faculty in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences took their concerns to University administrators, who heeded the request.

Today, the space is modern, functional, ergonomically correct, and conforms to industry

standards, says Dr. Valerie Giddings, department chair. New sewing machines, tables, efficient storage, cork work tables, self healing walls and instructional technology — including a Smart Board — are among the resources available to students.

"This is the type of environment that students will be working in when they graduate," Giddings said.

Upgrading the lab was important because the Fashion Merchandising and Design Program has the largest enrollment in SAES, with more than 140 students. Important as well,

because the lab forms the hub of the curriculum, buzzing with creative energy every afternoon of the semester. Here, students get hands-on practice in the life cycle of a garment, a process that begins with putting a concept on paper, and then on a fitted muslin test garment. Once fitted, the measurements are transferred onto a flat pattern to make them ready, in theory, for mass production. Finally, the design is constructed from real fabric. In the process, students learn that transforming an idea on paper into a sewable, wearable and marketable product is hard work, involving CAD and an understanding of textiles, marketing, consumer purchasing behavior and business trends.

Mercer's next step is to pursue a master's at the acclaimed Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), which she will attend at the college's Atlanta campus. It's good to leave the A&T program knowing that future Aggies will benefit from the new design lab, she says.

"The lab now is a place you want to learn in, and an environment where you can learn," she said.

for more information

about the Fashion Merchandising and Design Program, contact
Dr. Valerie Giddings at 336.334.7850, or vlgiddin@ncat.edu

Student standouts speak well for class of 2012

FOUR SAES HONORS STUDENTS chosen to represent their departments during awards ceremonies this spring, were among the 224 graduates from the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences in 2011–12. From a nontraditional student who completed his formal education after losing his job in a layoff, to a student who grew up on the campus of N.C. A&T, their stories offer inspiration to undergraduates and encouragement about the future. They are:



• **John Hylton**, who by now is hard at work at his job as environmental engineer for the John Deere company in Des Moines, Iowa. Hylton, 29, was a self-described “nontraditional student” who started in the SAES’s biological engineering program three years ago. He decided to pursue a four-year degree after what he jokingly describes as “early retirement”—a layoff from another company.

Hylton parlayed his two-year associate’s degree in business administration into something that better fit his passion: the engineering of living things. “I love math and science and I knew engineering was the way I wanted to go,” says Hylton of Natural Resources and Environmental Design. “What drew me to it was the living system. Nature has already come up with solutions to our problems and all we have to do is learn from it ... and learn how to replicate those solutions.”



• **Amber Lassiter**, a Charlotte native, is on her way to the College of Veterinary Medicine at N.C. State in the fall, but it is A&T that she credits for a phenomenal learning experience. “I have grown tremendously and I have seen my classmates grow as well,” says Lassiter, 21. “I’ve never met such wonderful and encouraging professors as we have in the Department of Animal Sciences.” Lassiter was inspired to study animal sciences after her dog died of lymph node cancer when Lassiter was 15. She wanted to better understand the disease and what she could do to prevent it. After further study at A&T, Lassiter has realized that her true calling is to study food animals, such as goats, pigs and cattle. Her ultimate career goal involves interstate transportation of animals for USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Lassiter is working in APHIS’s Raleigh office this summer.



• **Leonyce Moses**, of the Department of Agribusiness, Applied Economics and Agriscience Education, says: “My entire life has revolved around A&T.” She is the daughter of two long-time SAES employees: Leon Moses, the University Farm superintendent, and Iris Moses, administrative assistant in the department where her daughter matriculated. They are both A&T alumni as is Leonyce Moses’s older brother. As a USDA 1890 Scholar, Moses, 21, will spend the summer of 2012 satisfying an internship with the U.S. Forest Service in Milwaukee, and returns to her beloved alma mater in the fall to pursue a graduate degree in agricultural economics. She ultimately wants to get a Ph.D. in economics and teach at the university level. Moses loves the business side of agriculture, having started businesses in babysitting and nail-design even as an adolescent. She currently has a business, Jewel Embellishing, adorning accessories.



• **Marisa Tyler**, 22, knew by the time that she was in junior high school that she wanted a career in the fashion industry. The Garner native came to A&T and actually learned to sew, and is taking the family and consumer sciences degree that she just completed all the way to the top. She’ll pursue a graduate degree in merchandising and international trade at the University of Georgia this fall, and will continue on to UGA’s doctoral program in textile science. Tyler’s ultimate goal is to teach at the university level and head her own small design firm. When just a freshman in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department, Tyler led a student petition drive to renovate Benbow Hall. Even though Benbow has not been renovated, Tyler is thrilled that its administrative offices have been remodeled and a design laboratory has been updated. “Being at A&T taught me how to take action instead of sitting back,” says Tyler, who wants to continue working with the FCS department as an alumna to help “improve the department in any way that I can.”



Functional foods research tops 2011-12 awards menu

Herbal healers have known for millennia that plants can heal as well as nourish, but how they do so has remained a mystery, until recently. Now, as biochemists continue to apply sophisticated new tools and expertise to the study of plant chemistry, some of that mystery is being unlocked. Among them is Dr. Shengmin Sang, lead scientist for functional foods at the SAES's Center for Excellence in Post-Harvest Technologies (CEPHT).

In recognition of his achievements in functional foods research, Sang was named SAES Outstanding Researcher of the Year during the School's annual Awards Banquet April 12.

Since joining the faculty in 2010, he has initiated and now leads seven research projects that are worth close to \$1.4 million. He holds three patents, and is lead or co-author of more than 120 journal publications, numerous book chapters, and is co-editor of the textbook, *Herbs: Challenges in Chemistry & Biology*. In addition to an active research program, Sang also mentors and teaches students of all levels, from high school to Ph.D. candidates.

Sang's lab at the North Carolina Research Campus, where CEPHT is housed, is discovering that components found in food such as tea, ginger, soy and wheat bran can be good medicine for some of humankind's worst diseases, including cancer, diabetes and heart disease. The work is important, he says, because "functional foods research can help food industries provide real healthy foods to consumers and provide science-based knowledge to consumers."

Sang says the field of functional foods research is rewarding because, "It is directly related to our daily life and to our health."

In addition to expertise in biochemistry, CEPHT also aids industry with expertise in food engineering, food safety and product development.



Jefferson-Moore wins two teaching awards

As she approaches her eighth year on the SAES faculty, Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore continues to rack up the teaching awards.

Spring 2012 saw the associate professor of agricultural economics presented with two: the Gamma Sigma Delta Honor Society of Agriculture Award of Excellence for Teaching, as well as the SAES Outstanding Teacher of the Year.

Add to these two others, from 2007-08, when she was presented the A&T University Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, and the SAES Junior Faculty Teaching Award, and it is beginning to look like Jefferson-Moore may be among the winningest recipients of teaching awards in the SAES.

Joshua Muench of Greensboro, a senior agribusiness and general economics major, says he has benefitted enormously from Jefferson-Moore's teaching and advising. He credits her with sponsoring him at a professional conference, and advising him on his career goals.

"She deserves it 100 percent," he said. "I can't tell you

how many times I've sat in her office and talked about my goals, and she's helped me achieve them."

In recommending Jefferson-Moore for the Gamma Sig award Dr. Donald McDowell, professor, described her as "nurturing," "scholarly" and "an adroit researcher." He also praised her initiative in developing two online courses; in redesigning undergraduate and graduate economics curriculums, and in implementing a summer program for high school students interested in agricultural professions.

"She is a dedicated instructor who has the enviable ability of translating technical constructs to students in a clear and concise manner," McDowell wrote.

Jefferson-Moore is also active in publishing and professional presentations. She is involved in five research studies worth \$1 million. Her professional contributions extend to the SAES and University as well, and include current service on 21 committees.

Growing up in Louisiana as the daughter of two educators, Jefferson-Moore said the last thing she thought she wanted to be was a teacher. That changed when she took her first economics course at Southern University, with an especially inspiring professor.

"Dr. Patricia McLean-Meyinsse, was very tall, intimidating, challenging and female. After all of the hard work, I earned an A in the course and was truly inspired. I realized, not everything comes easy, but as she would tell us, 'Everything's easy once you know it.' I knew it, I believed it, I wanted to be just like her," Jefferson-Moore recollected.

The most rewarding experience about teaching is, "Seeing the reaction in my students' faces when the light bulb illuminates," she added.



for more information

on the Center for Excellence in Post-Harvest Technologies, contact CEPHT at 704.250.5700 visit www.ncat.edu/academics/saes/agresearch/cepht.html

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on the *move*/flip side

A photograph showing a person's legs in jeans and boots standing in a field with large-leafed plants, likely watermelons.

Improving Practices to Profits
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8 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Rain or shine

UNIVERSITY FARM at N.C. A&T State University
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Advance registration suggested; contact Alexis Gaines at 336.334.7956 or ajgaines@ncat.edu

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